

Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement

*We recognize that the land where we gather for worship belongs to God, as does all of creation. We also know that this is the unceded territory of the Lkwungen and WSÁNEĆ people. As we pray, reflect, and celebrate in this place, we do so as guests lamenting the injustice in our history. We ask that the God of love and justice lead us along the path of reconciliation, bringing accountability and healing. May we be inspired to forge new relationships of respect and solidarity.*

Call to Worship / Advent Candles

*(Light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love)*

God sent Jesus.

**Jesus was born for all.**

Joseph and Mary did what God asked.

**Jesus was born for all.**

Tonight, we remember God's greatest gift.

**Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us.**

*(Light the Christ candle)*

Gathering Prayer

God of mystery and wonder, Creator, Christ and Spirit, on this holy night, the angels sing your praises with great joy. The shepherds welcome your saving love, born in a manger. Mary and Joseph ponder your promise, cradled in their arms. Glory to you, O God, for such gifts entrusted to us in Christ Jesus! And so we come to praise you – singing with the angels – amazed like the shepherds – embracing the Christ Child in our hearts once again. Help us as we listen to the story of Jesus' birth. Remind us that Jesus is what is most important about Christmas. Help us to make room for him in our lives. Amen

➤ *Emmanuel soon will appear*

***Meet Joseph***

Joseph was a carpenter from Nazareth. He was a Jewish descendent of King David. He was a good man who cared very much about Mary, who he was engaged to. When he found out Mary was pregnant, he wondered what he should do. He was told by an angel in a dream that the baby Mary was carrying came from God and that he should marry Mary and look after her and the child.

➤ *The hands that first held Mary's child*

### Prayer for Understanding

**God of light and life, open our hearts to hear your promise of new life in the familiar stories of Christmas. Surprise us with new insights and refresh us with deep wisdom. Enfold us in the light of your Holy Spirit as we attend to the baby in the manger. Amen**

### Scripture and Song

**Isaiah 9: 2-7 [OT 638]**

**Mary Dimech**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

➤ *Emmanuel, Emmanuel (repeated)*

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**Luke 2: 1-7 [NT 58]**

**Kathy Bracken**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered.

Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

➤ *Away in a manger*

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**Luke 2: 8-14****Kathy Bracken**

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

➤ *Hark! the herald angels sing*

**139****Luke 2: 15-20****Mary Dimech**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

So, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

➤ *Oh come, all ye faithful*

**159****Questions / Reflection**

1. I wonder how Joseph felt when he found out that Mary was pregnant and that he would be he would be parent to the Son of God?
2. Why does it matter to us today that Jesus was born?  
Why is it significant that Jesus came into the world as a baby, born from Mary?
3. What do you think it means that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us?
4. I wonder how you and I can make room for Jesus in our lives?

➤ *Born in the night*

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### Offering and Prayer

God's gift in the Christ Child arrived in a small town, a humble stable, to a couple no one invited in – and still that gift changes lives. Our gifts to God this Christmas share in that miracle.

**Generous and loving God, your gift to us in Christ Jesus still draws us to manger and opens our hearts with wonder. Bless our gifts in his name, so that they may draw others to your love and the blessing we have found in the Holy One, born for us this night. Amen**

### Invitation to the Lord's Table

This is the Table of the Lord. Come, like Mary, placing your trust in God to help you through whatever lies ahead. Come, like Joseph, relying not on the law or reputation, or anything other than the love of God. Come, like the angels, lifting your voice in praise of God, spreading peace to all the earth. Come, like the shepherds, called from work to the joy of worship. Come, like the Magi, from all corners of the globe, to greet the Christ child. This is the Table of the Lord. Come, all you who long to meet God here, for you are very welcome.

➤ *Let all mortal flesh keep silence*

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### † Celebrating Together with Thanksgiving

God be with you.

**And also, with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to God.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is good to give God thanks and praise.**

Gracious God, Creator of heaven and earth, you created light out of nothing and formed us in your image – calling us to love and serve you – to live in peace in the world you love. When we turned from you, you did not turn from us. You offered us a word of liberation through the prophets, guiding us back to follow your way. And so with choirs of angels and archangels, with shepherds and saints, prophets and disciples, with your people from every time and place, we join the whole creation to lift our hearts in joyful praise...

*O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space. All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace. Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise. And blessed is the one who comes and bears your name always!*

We give you thanks, holy God, for sending Jesus into the world. Born in the night, he is the Light of the World. Born in the humility of a stable, he is filled with majesty. Though poor, he is rich in mercy and grace. Though rejected by the world, he welcomes all to his side. Though dying on the cross, he brings new life. In rising from the grave, he promises to be with us always. And when he was raised to your glory, you sent your Holy Spirit to keep us united with him and one another. Remembering these wondrous things, we proclaim the mystery of faith...

*Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!*  
*Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!*

Merciful God, pour out your grace upon us, O God, and upon the simple gifts of this meal. Send your Spirit on us and on what we do here as we gather at the Lord's Table to eat and drink of the living Word. May we be one in Christ and one with your vision of peace and plenty. **In Christ, with Christ, through Christ – by the power of the Holy Spirit – all glory is yours, now and forever and so we sing...**

*Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!*  
*Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!*

Sharing Bread and Cup      **Anne / Fiona / Steve**

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus sat down to a meal with his friends. While they were eating, he took the bread, said a prayer and shared with everyone at the table saying: *This is my body, which is for you. Do this to remember me.*

Later, when the meal was ending, he took a cup of wine and raised it, saying: *This cup is God's new covenant, made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me.*

The one who was first held by Mary, is held for us in this bread.

The one whose body was laid in a manger, is cradled in this cup.

In these gifts God comes to us so that we may come to God.

The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving.

*Please come forward to receive Holy Communion – everyone is welcome at this table.*  
*If you are unable to come to the front, please signal an elder who will come and serve you.*  
*We use gluten-free bread. Both juice and wine are available.*

### Closing Prayer

Eternal and ever-present God, in gratitude for this meal in which you have given yourself to us, we give ourselves to you. Take us out this night to walk in your light, to follow the Prince of Peace, to lead lives filled with your love, feeding a hungry world, and sharing your Good News with those we meet. We thank you this holy night that you chose to be with us. Thank you for Mary and Joseph. Thank you for loving us and sending Jesus to be the saviour of all the Earth. We join our voices to sing in prayer...

➤ ***Our Father in heaven*** (*The Lord's Prayer – no repeats*) **469**

### Blessing

To you is born this night a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. May the love of the Christ Child embrace you and the joy of the Christ Child fill your heart. May the peace of the Christ Child give you rest and the hope of the Christ Child guide you into the year ahead. Amen

### Candles

➤ ***Silent night! Holy night!*** **154**

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<sup>1</sup>Service idea from Journey to Christmas Advent Devotional (PCC)